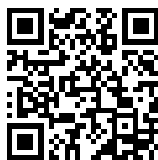

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MR. FLEXNER'S SCHOOL.



"If a teacher can induce enthusiasm in his pupils, the amount of material that an average child can assimilate is as astonishing as is the little that will fag him, if it is taught dully or incoherently."

G. Stanley Hall.



Courier-Journal Job Printing Company,
1898.

Contents.

INTRODUCTION	- - - - -	5
ORGANIZATION	- - - - -	7
THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM	- - - - -	8
INDIVIDUAL TEACHING	- - - - -	14
WHEN SHOULD TRAINING BEGIN?	- - - - -	16
CHOICE OF SUBJECTS	- - - - -	18
LEARNING HOW TO STUDY	- - - - -	21
DISCIPLINE	- - - - -	24
EXAMINATIONS AND MARKS	- - - - -	26
ENTERING COLLEGE	- - - - -	27
RESULTS	- - - - -	28
CONSULTATION HOURS	- - - - -	31
REFERENCES	- - - - -	32

Introduction.

In this pamphlet it is my object to state concisely the methods which I employ and the results which I have obtained in the school that I established six years ago, in the hope of applying certain fundamental educational principles, of the soundness of which long experience in ordinary high and grammar schools had convinced me. The undertaking from the very first aroused considerable interest in this community ; with the progress of time, as solid results have appeared, even where they were least expected, this interest has grown and extended. Inquiries as to my methods and results have come to me from all sections of the country, though I have always discouraged the sending of pupils from a distance, unless in cases where they could enter a suitable family life ; while in the city I have for several years past found it necessary to decline many pupils.

These facts, to my mind, indicate plainly two things : First, that there is felt to be something radically wrong in both the spirit and the method of the regular school ; second, that to no child has been given its proper opportunity, mentally and morally, until by individual and personal instruction, the conditions required for its growth and expansion have been ascertained and provided. Undoubtedly something more than even individual attention is needed ; a certain kind of tact, a certain freedom of association, a certain closeness of sympathy — no child will display his full capacity, no child will spon-

taneously and unconsciously gravitate toward his best, unless he feels these favoring conditions.

The results which I have thus obtained may be briefly summarized. Without exception, the pressure of school work has been greatly reduced. I have found that as soon as active interest is secured, children will do in a few hours at school more work and of far higher quality than previously in the long hours of application at school and at home. In case of children of uncertain health this has proved an immense advantage. Bright pupils of all ages have been able to effect remarkable economy of time, and that without the least urging. For example, I have boys of sixteen doing with ease the same work in Latin, Greek, Mathematics and other subjects that is done by other boys of eighteen and twenty who have followed the regular school course. But the most astonishing results have taken place in the class of boys and girls that are considered failures, pupils whose ideas are loose and inaccurate, whose hold is weak, and who in general are intellectually listless or indifferent. I have found in practically every such instance that previous failure or lack of interest has had no real significance; that the child needed simply to be studied in order that he might be brought to realize his hitherto untried and unknown capacity; that as soon as this was done a remarkable transformation, both intellectual and moral, has taken place. A fuller statement covering all these points will be found in the following pages.

ABRAHAM FLEXNER.

Louisville, May 15, 1898.

Organization.

At the very outset I can not emphasize too strongly the fact that the number of pupils is strictly limited, in order that I may obtain the fullest knowledge of their character, taste, endowment and previous history, and may cultivate intimate personal relations with each child. *To attain this end every pupil is taught separately.* The school is divided into two sections: the primary department, containing children from six to twelve years of age, in charge of Miss Gertrude Flexner, and rigidly limited to ten children, experience having demonstrated that this is the number which, within ordinary school hours, a single teacher can reach individually; the secondary department for pupils over twelve, similarly limited in number, in my own charge, with the assistance, in modern languages and history, of Miss Mary Flexner (B. A., Bryn Mawr College). The tuition fee for the primary department is one-half of that charged for advanced pupils.

The work as a whole is under my close supervision and direction, and with the enrolment thus restricted, I am entirely familiar with the needs and progress of every pupil. I am convinced that before educational problems can be solved, the individual child must be understood, and he can

not be understood without sympathetic study, observation and intercourse on the teacher's part. Our efforts are, therefore, concentrated on a very small number of children, with whom we live on intimate terms, socially and intellectually.

In view of the fact that pupils are taught separately and are provided with different rooms for the purpose of study, both boys and girls are admitted at any stage.

The Educational Problem.

That the usual methods of teaching have failed to achieve the success expected of them is now an admitted fact. The air is full of vague and restless seeking for a "new education," which shall in some way repair the shortcomings of the old familiar educational practices. Psychologists, educators and laymen agree in deploring the unsatisfactory outcome of the elaborate schooling to which children are ordinarily subjected. A vigorous writer in *The Nation* has recently declared that education as commonly carried on is a process by which children "are choked, stunted and sterilized," and he quotes approvingly a well-known saying of Professor Jowett, the Master of Balliol, that "education is the grave of the mind." Professor Baldwin, of Princeton, in his lately published work on Mental Development, says: "Every time we send a child out of the home

into the school we subject him to experiment of the most serious and alarming kind. He goes into the hands of a teacher who is not only not wise unto the child's salvation, but who is, on the contrary, *a machine for administering a single experiment to an infinite variety of children. It is perfectly certain that two in every three children are irretrievably damaged or hindered in their mental and moral development in the school.*" And to the same effect Professor Dewey, of the University of Chicago, speaks in a recent essay: "I do not see how any one at all familiar with the great mass of existing school work can deny that the greater part of the pupils is gradually forming habits of divided attention. I do not think it would be well for us to have to face the actual psychological condition of the majority of the pupils that leave our schools. We should find this division of attention and the resulting disintegration so great that we might be discouraged from all future endeavor."

These are severe words, but they are uttered by scientific and philosophic thinkers who are accustomed to speak with scrupulous moderation. I believe that they understate, rather than overstate, the case; that the actual mental condition of the boys and girls who present themselves, at seventeen or later, for admission to college is worse, not better, than Professor Dewey represents it. After twelve or thirteen years of consecutive training, American boys and girls

have, as a rule, no interest in ideas, no love of books; their notions of history, literature, science are exceedingly crude; their power of expression in their native tongue is amazingly weak; they are far less keen and accurate in observation than when this "training" began. We are, therefore, driven to ask: What is fundamentally responsible for this educational failure?

In the first place, it should be remembered that our graded schools are parts of a system which originally aimed at the diffusion of the mere tools of learning—reading, writing, arithmetic, geography in its most superficial aspects. The school of the present day must place before itself a much more difficult and complicated task. The elements of knowledge that were once regarded as a fair equipment for the duties and responsibilities of active life have proved decidedly inadequate to the larger demands of our own day. It is necessary not only that children should actually know more, but that their own latent abilities should be so aroused and utilized that they may be capable of meeting the severer strain of modern civilization. There is, in fact, nothing that so makes for character, nothing that leads so surely to the required suppleness of mind, as the consciousness of one's power to do something that lies out of the ordinary routine of life. I believe firmly that this consciousness and confidence can be developed in practically every child; that when developed, the child has re-

ceived its most effective preparation for life; but I believe, just as firmly, that the ordinary school, with its unbending routine, tends to crush all spontaneity, all originality, out of any but the most robust temperament; that there can be no worse preparation for life than the deadening, repressive methods of the ordinary school-room, from whose influence both character and intellect are bound to suffer seriously and permanently.

The cardinal feature of the system against which these criticisms are directed is the grouping of children in classes, varying in number from fifteen to sixty, and the instruction of such classes as solid groups. A regular curriculum is marked out to be completed by all, regardless of individual variations, within a specified time, at the end of which period the entire class is "promoted," that is, transferred to another teacher to whom the members are total strangers, and with whom they remain for another year, the work of which has been similarly fixed beforehand in iron-clad fashion. The class promoted includes both those that have done well and those that have just succeeded in keeping afloat, and identical tasks are set before students of all varieties of capacity and industry. Thus uniformly thorough work can be neither expected nor obtained. This mechanical, unyielding routine is continued for twelve or thirteen years. Instruction, therefore, assumes a rigid, unelastic character, in which everything is

artificially predetermined. Changes to meet special needs are impossible, because change would upset the close connections which a graded course of study requires: hence everything goes by "classes," and the individual child can not be reckoned with.

On educational grounds this system is, in my judgment, absolutely indefensible. As a plain matter of fact, no two children can possibly be found requiring identical treatment. Every parent recognizes this, except in education, where in truth it is of supreme importance. The effort to teach "wholesale," be the class large or small, means the reduction of every child to the average, the ruthless obliteration of every distinctive mark of individuality; it means that all children are conceived under one form; that they are made to think alike, act alike, study alike. They are, as far as nature will allow, reduced to one pattern; everything that is characteristic, everything that a wise teacher would seize hold of as indicative of individuality, is ignored or destroyed.

Thus, at the outset, we encounter two fatal obstacles to wise and thorough training: the class containing fifteen to sixty pupils, and the annual change of teachers. The first condition forbids the teacher to learn the child's nature, or to make special efforts to meet individual necessities; the second condition compels the teacher to waste any experience gained during the year, and forces the child to undergo every year a new process of

experimentation. The child mind is the most sensitive organ that can be conceived; it reaches out hesitatingly, this way and that, in search of its appropriate nourishment. We ought, therefore, to be constantly watching for the indications which the soul thus gives of its needs and powers. What chance, what stimulus is offered to it, when it is forever driven back upon itself, when it is compelled to surrender every characteristic in which it differs from the commonplace conception of the "average" child?

The actual outcome of this system of education has been exactly what might have been anticipated after a philosophical consideration of its method; and no half-way measures of reform, such as are contemplated by practically all champions of the so-called "new education," go to the root of the difficulty. Nature study, object study, etc., are excellent things, and I use them freely. But no change in the course of study can effect a radical improvement, until the destruction of these immobile groups gives the individual child liberty to put forth his inherent powers. The school must supply the nutriment, must maintain the conditions necessary for sound, healthy growth. If it does these things, well balanced, well-nourished, active minds will result; and the school that tries to do more or otherwise will simply abuse and wreck in varying degrees the children with whose mental and moral natures it experiments.

Individual Teaching.

The vicious results of class work can, I believe, be corrected in but one way — by strictly individual teaching. Instead of a curriculum constructed in reference to the supposed needs and capacity of an imaginary child, and then forced on an infinite variety of real children, every child must be regarded as a problem to be studied and solved by itself. I have never found two children that, when approached in this way, demanded the same treatment. Their differences in taste, capacity, strength, are infinite; to ignore these means the reduction of every child to the barest and most uninteresting child type. The school, which ought to protect the child against the uniformity that is the main disadvantage of civilization, thus becomes the chief agent in destroying individuality, and forbidding and repressing originality.

This argument does not aim at the isolation of children; on the contrary, growth demands association. But as a child's associates are among the important formative influences, these require selection and supervision along with other conditions that minister to his development. The school, therefore, should consist of pupils sufficiently numerous to supply this need, in order that through association the child may learn for-

bearance and co-operation, and may find in play an outlet for his creative faculties and bodily energies.

Starting then, with the principle that every pupil is to be treated as an independent unit, we make it our first concern to understand the child ; usually in an informal way we test the thoroughness of his previous study, endeavor to ascertain the line of his interests, his character, his recreations, etc. As we feel our knowledge of his personality becoming fuller, we try to frame for him such a course of study as seems best fitted to meet his needs. When experience recommends changes, we do not refuse to make them, though in this we move cautiously. The course of study is designed to meet not only present exigencies, but future probabilities and possibilities; and when once framed it is pursued without regard to the work of other pupils. No pupil is hastened, no pupil is hindered, by any other; *every pupil recites every lesson in full every day.*

The results of this intimate relation between pupil and teacher are by no means simply intellectual. We notice that children promptly lose that repugnance to school which is nowadays so common. In its stead there grows up, sometimes very quickly, sometimes gradually, a genuine love of books, of learning, of mental activity. But beyond these results, which are primarily intellectual, we observe certain moral changes of even greater importance. The child's attitude

becomes different, for his thoughts and energies are fruitfully occupied. He loses his restlessness, aimlessness, waywardness. Such childish bad habits as he may have acquired through accidental associations disappear. A wholesome ambition to excel, and a wholesome confidence in his own power to succeed, take the place of the languor and indifference which are so common among American school boys and girls.

When Should Training Begin?

If now it be true that the child's needs must be the one consideration in the construction of its school course, it is absolutely essential that its training be continuous and uninterrupted. Beyond question, in an educational sense, a child's growing years are the most important in its existence. There is a popular notion that any fairly intelligent person can teach children from six to ten, but that skillful teaching is required during the high school or college preparatory period. No more dangerous blunder could be made. At the time when the child is usually under the care of ignorant nurses, inexperienced governesses or immature teachers, the outlines and substance of its mind and character are being solidly and irretrievably established. In other words, in the years when training counts for the most, when the still plastic mind submits most

readily to the moulder's hand, the child is usually abandoned to influences which, if not positively harmful, are certainly ineffective and aimless; the energy which might be converted into mental and moral power is, if not actually misdirected, at least suffered to diffuse itself in a thousand directions and thus waste entirely.

The practical point in the training of children is to make the most of the equipment with which they enter life. As a matter of fact, only in the rarest cases does the child attain its full capacity. Education ought, therefore, to address itself to utilizing every part of the child's endowment. Can this delicate task be left to chance? On the contrary, to surround the child with the influences that will call out its latent power, to reduce its wayward and spasmodic expressions of energy to order, to enlist its interest in what will nourish and sustain it—to do these things is so far from being a matter to be left to chance that their successful achievement constitutes the very ideal of the art of teaching.

For these reasons we may expect the best educational result where children proceed regularly in the manner above described from the beginning of their school education, at the age of six or seven, up to the full maturity of their powers; but if for any reason the child has started otherwise, the sooner it is removed from the repressing influence of the "class" room, the more effectively can its loss be repaired. The same ideals, the

same supervision should guide throughout this critical epoch. Thus rational purpose and full knowledge of the child supplement and modify each other at every step.

Choice of Subjects.

In the effort to find each pupil's special aptitudes and needs, a wide range of subjects is employed, but, at the same time, it is my general purpose to strive toward liberal training, and away from premature and narrow specialization. A pupil's work thus begins on a broad basis, and as he approaches the choice of a definite career his studies gradually converge toward that focus. From the very outset, however, I abolish all purely artificial tasks (*e. g.*, looking up long lists of words in the dictionary, composing lengthy compositions on subjects remote from a child's interests, studying abstract English grammar, etc.), which greatly tax a pupil's time and attention, though they are of absolutely no educational value. Vital and permanently interesting subjects are begun in their stead. The child feels at once that he is doing something of lasting importance; in the way appropriate to his years he is thus early in contact with ideas of abiding interest.

It is curious how, in this matter of interest, adults commonly use one standard of judgment

for themselves and another for their children. The books, the ideas, the subjects that help us, we admit, are those that take hold of us, those that we throw ourselves into, those that we care for. A man assimilates what he is interested in ; what makes him alert attracts his notice. It is true that most men have narrow fields of interest, and we want to avoid this narrowness in educating children. But the way to avoid it is not to destroy interest, by crowding children with dull, dry stuff in which they can not possibly take any interest at all. Such teaching is exactly what has helped to bring about the narrowed interests of most men. The way to enlarge the child's range is, early in life, to open up every possible avenue to interest, so to handle the child that he will reach out eagerly for, and assimilate ideas from, every available source.

Instead of this, what does schooling usually amount to ? It is a dry, tedious, unfruitful, uninteresting study of verbal forms and technicalities. These purely artificial contrivances are drilled into the hungry young mind on the ground of affording mental discipline ! It is hard to speak with tolerance of such abuse of a child's powers. Yet, when this sort of " training " has gone on for ten or twelve years, we are amazed to find that boys and girls do not care for study, do not know how to think clearly or observe accurately, and have no active interest in any serious subject.

Assuredly Professor Jowett was right: "Education is the grave of the mind."

I maintain that the range of a child's activity is wide, its instinct to appropriate healthful mental food remarkably keen; that the child can be disciplined only through what it can be interested in; that the attempt to discipline it through what it loathes can only lead to "parrot" work and conduce to superficial habits of studying under compulsion, which in the end will, in almost all cases, utterly break down. The teacher's skill is needed to awaken and maintain interest in subjects that the child would not spontaneously select; and this can be done, not by making the child's work easy—nothing destroys interest more effectively than mere ease—but by awakening his consciousness of power in directions unsuspected by himself. Not by eliminating difficulty, but by judiciously approaching and overcoming one obstacle after another, is the pupil's enthusiastic interest to be aroused and sustained.

But this delicate guiding and cultivation of the child's interest is possible only where individual instruction enables the teacher to adapt perfectly means to end. The teacher's resources are under such conditions practically unlimited; and hence the child's opportunities are similarly enlarged.

Learn How to Study.

Assuming now that the child's interest in his work is aroused, the problem of developing habits of close application next presents itself. Very few students ever acquire real concentration. The daily results of the five or six hours spent at school and several hours of study at home are comparatively insignificant. The remedy for this waste of time is partly to be sought in abolishing useless studies and substituting for them, at the very beginning, subjects in which a child may make steady and uninterrupted progress through its entire school life. Natural science, ancient and modern languages, free-hand drawing, modeling, etc., instead of being postponed until it becomes difficult to enlist interest in a new study, ought to meet and entice the child at the very threshold. So far from being pressed, the child is thus relieved of pressure; he spends far less time daily over his books and has far more to show for the effort put forth. Hence we do not require a child to carry his books home, there to puzzle over the next day's task with such assistance as he can get from his elders. Children under twelve have no home work at all; their studying is carried on in the school room under immediate supervision. They are thus taught how to study economically and effectively. A

pupil that is in difficulty receives the required assistance at once. He is not left to prepare a necessarily imperfect lesson because no light is to be had until he reaches school the next day; nor, on the other hand, is he tempted to obtain assistance which may enable him, for a time at least, to deceive his teacher. His situation promotes perfect candor on his part. Thus, there exists no reason why thoroughly satisfactory work should not be the rule, and, indeed, there exists every reason why it may be expected. We are, however, careful never to render a pupil assistance except where it is clear that he can not help himself; and, in fact, this is so soon understood that, after a few weeks' experience, a new pupil knows quite well when he may, and when he may not, expect aid.

As pupils grow older, as their aims become more definite, and they become more and more capable of helping themselves, their home work naturally increases; but I believe that at every period scope should be left for spontaneous growth. It must be borne in mind that the most cunningly devised curriculum can not fully satisfy all the varied powers and needs of the human soul; and we must give nature time and opportunity to seek her own forms of expression. Play and miscellaneous reading are, therefore, of supreme educational importance; and a too exacting school routine allows for neither.

If excessive home work is thus bad for good

students, its effect upon those with less fondness for study is still worse. It disgusts them with school, and makes them indifferent to failure. Often enough boys and girls who would gladly perform reasonable and intelligible tasks are driven from study by the amount of home work laid upon them. The necessity for it implies a large waste of time in school, whether such waste be due to the size of classes or to some other cause. It, therefore, fails of its purpose in every direction, and deserves to be strongly condemned as a vicious practice.

Among the very worst consequences of the prevailing method and spirit of school work may be mentioned the undoubted fact that children are actually withdrawn from, rather than led into, the love of mental activity. For example, a boy who reads does so in spite of his school duties, not because of them. His school work takes no account of this side of his intellectual life. Very often he reads only at the cost of sacrificing his "lessons"; and even where his "lessons" leave him the necessary time and energy, he drifts, in his choice of literature, entirely without direction.

I have for several years endeavored to meet this important problem. In the first place, in selecting subjects for daily composition work we rely largely on the youthful literature now so admirable, abundant and easily procured. Very soon children who have never before read a book show eagerness to push ahead. The real difficulty

has come, not in arousing the taste for reading, but in satisfying and feeding it when once aroused. The absence of a free circulating library has been seriously felt. I hope for this reason to establish in the school a library for boys and girls, with a view to maintaining and developing the love of reading. I shall thus be enabled to guide the reading of those who already love to read, and to arouse the desire in those thus far indifferent. I can not but believe that schooling which finds and leaves a boy without this desire has failed to awaken him fully, for the true test of effective education must, in the end, be the extent to which the child's powers to help himself have been stimulated.

Discipline.

It is not easy to describe our discipline, for we work under no rigid rules of any kind. Pupils are expected, as they very soon understand, to attend strictly to their work, to concentrate their attention, to respect the wishes and feelings of others. The atmosphere with which we surround ourselves conduces to this state of feeling, for the best of good humor prevails, and even those who begin in the most indifferent spirit soon catch the general inspiration; envy and jealousy are therefore unknown. We try, in every possible way, to introduce variety into our school life, and to break loose from mechanical and life-

less uniformity. For example, instead of using the same text book with all pupils, where there are several books of equal merit, different boys use different books ; for the sake of variety of exercise they frequently exchange with one another. So, likewise, we indulge in unexpected recreation, when it has been fairly earned. Our personal relations with our pupils are of the freest and easiest kind, yet I have never known a time when they have, on this account, gone too far ; on the contrary, I believe that the effect of our participation in their recreation has been to restrain and elevate. We try to enjoy ourselves while we work. Freedom has developed no vicious instincts. We have had no practical jokes, no rough play. No punishments or penalties of any kind are used ; very quickly a pupil learns to respond to the sentiment of the school. Instead of censuring, I endeavor, by questioning, to lead a pupil to pass judgment on himself. A boy that has been condemned, whether rightly or wrongly, is in conscious antagonism to his teacher, but a boy that condemns himself has made a large stride toward improvement. Thus kindly and patient counsel has proven the most effective appeal. The school resembles, in a word, not a military company where every individual is compelled to keep pace with every other, but a good-natured race, where each runner is trying to reach his goal speedily ; and the conditions of the race are such that thoroughness

is not sacrificed, and, hence, overstraining is avoided.

Examinations and Marks.

It naturally follows that we hold no competitive examinations and bestow no marks, honors, prizes or distinctions of any kind. No need for such incentives to effort has ever been felt. At times, for special purposes, we give written reviews to certain pupils, and at intervals allow those preparing for college to try college examinations; but these tests are never competitive, and while we criticise the papers most freely, we never attempt to grade them. Instead of sending home regular reports, I am in the habit either of seeing parents now and then, or informing them by letter just how their child is doing, and what his needs seem to be. This appears to me in every way superior to any system of marking, for marks are more apt to dishearten than to encourage, and they breed a petty, envious spirit that ought to be sedulously avoided. There are, moreover, strong objections on moral grounds to be urged against the practice of striking an average between a child's deficiencies and his successes, and allowing a mere predominance of the latter to ensure him a clear conscience.

The discipline of the class system tends, indeed, to weaken, not to strengthen character. The false method of estimating merit by marks puts a

premium on small shrewdness, superficial readiness and clever plausibility, instead of promoting actual effort, which is the only thing worth measuring or encouraging.

Entering College.

I have not called the school a Preparatory School because I see no reason for confining work of this kind to those that expect a collegiate career. There are some reasons, indeed, for doing just the reverse. As a matter of fact, I believe that the desire for academic training is something to be encouraged wherever there is any possibility of gratifying such an ambition, but I am opposed to making any distinction in early life between those that expect and those that do not expect a college education. A distinction of this kind, which is practically, if not avowedly, made in many preparatory schools, seems to me to encourage a kind of intellectual arrogance already too common among college students. Again, there is no longer any necessity for selecting a college at the beginning of a boy's secondary school work. A pupil, prepared in general to enter a high-standard American college, ought to be able to enter Harvard, Yale, the Johns Hopkins, Vassar, Bryn Mawr, Wellesley, or a technical school, whether the preparation has distinctly aimed at a particular institution or

not ; and if he has been systematically and thoroughly taught, he ought to enter easily, without condition, and absolutely without pressure, by the time he has reached seventeen, which is much lower than the average age at which boys enter college, handicapped even then by conditions, as many are. The problem is more difficult and the outcome necessarily more uncertain in the case of students that at sixteen or later find themselves without formed habits of study or interest in books ; yet, as I have endeavored to show, it is to this state of affairs that the class system inevitably leads. The proper course to pursue in such instances is unquestionably to make the effort to retrieve ; for several years I have had a considerable number of pupils of this kind and in every case, where ample opportunity has been given, these students, most of whom began work very reluctantly, have entered college without a condition ; and, as a rule, their enthusiasm and interest have continued to grow.

Results.

In the preceding pages attention has been freely called to the steady and unmistakable loss of interest in and enthusiasm for study which takes place in most children as they approach their sixteenth year. If ordinary educational practice were sound, interest in study would, I contend,

increase, as increasing years strengthen and diversify the child's powers ; we should find backward children coming forward, not forward children going backward, as is now frequently the case. When the child that was, at three or four, keenly alive to every object within range of its senses, has become at thirteen or fourteen the average boy or girl, with the most astonishing incapacity for close observation or thought, something has evidently gone amiss. The experience of the last six years, during which I have completely broken away from accepted notions and practices, has amply confirmed this view ; assuming that home influences are in active sympathy with the influences that surround school life, I can see no reason why the school life of every child, without exception, should not be both happy and successful. I know that there are teachers who maintain that a child must be made to understand that it is his business to study, and who consider the school teacher as pre-eminently the school master. I certainly do not undervalue the importance of authority, but I believe that the highest and most effective authority is founded, not on coercion, but on the willing and active acquiescence and loyalty of the governed. It is my effort, therefore, to replace compulsion with tact ; to substitute enthusiasm, interest, life, for mere mechanical routine. I have had pupils ranging in age from six to twenty ; some have had good previous training, some

very bad ; a few have loved school, others have been indifferent, still others have hated it. Yet I think that thus far, almost without exception, they have, within a comparatively brief period after entrance, carried on their work with interest, and most of them with marked enthusiasm. I can not, therefore, but take a very hopeful view even of children that are usually regarded as failures at school. Their failure may generally be interpreted to mean that they have not been reached. The fault probably lies with the teacher or the system, not with them ; for I have known pupils of sixteen or seventeen, that had never succeeded at school, to retrieve themselves and develop a real love for study. Children of ordinary endowment, who have fortunately made an earlier start in the right direction, have accomplished vastly more than is ordinarily expected of them, and at the same time the pressure of school work has been greatly reduced. The class system underestimates what they can do and then makes it excessively hard to do even that. The pupils that I have in mind are reading Latin, French, German, studying Algebra and other subjects of like character at an age when they are usually being bored and starved with "language lessons" and other similar inventions of the class room ; they are carrying on their work for their work's sake. They frequently return to school in the afternoon of their own accord in order to push ahead ; and when I have been in the city during

the summer, they voluntarily spend a few hours each morning at work in one direction or another. The pupils that have done and are doing this are, I repeat, ordinary children, many of them having been regarded as failures heretofore. My main effort with them has been to find them out, then to help them to find themselves out. I work in the confident belief that the child can be reached ; that if it has lost interest, it is simply because it has not been reached. There, indeed, lies the teacher's function and opportunity ; and the child's whole future depends upon whether this opportunity is used or lost.

Consultation Hours.

Those desiring further information can meet me at the school building, 210 West Ormsby Ave., daily, except Saturday, until July 1st, between 8:30 and 12 o'clock. I shall be absent from the city from July 1st until September 1st; during this time personal application may be made to Mr. Bernard Flexner, Attorney, Kenyon Building ; inquiries addressed to the school will also receive prompt attention. After September 1st my office hours at the school building will be resumed. A special appointment may be arranged by mail.

References.

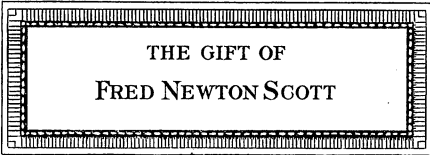
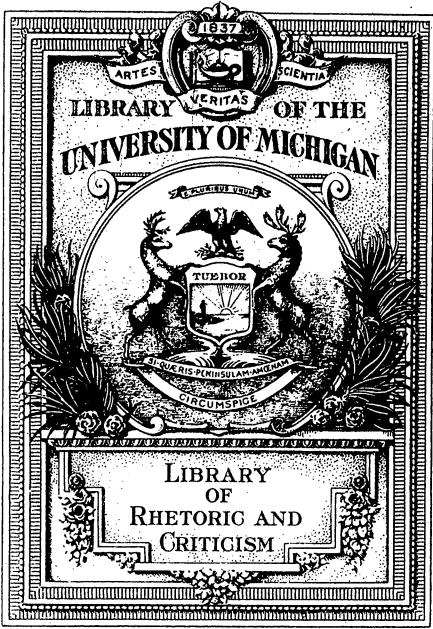
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